

# Pause for Breath with Amanda Ridings

## Purposeful time-out for leaders and coaches

### About you...

In my practice as an executive coach, I hear leaders say:

*"I'm constantly fire-fighting"*

*"I feel like a hamster in a wheel"*

*"I don't have time to think"*

If you feel caught up in relentless activity, imagine a week with time and space to take stock, reflect and access new approaches to enable you to connect more readily with your deeper wisdom. Imagine the delight of colleagues (not to mention family) when you return with a calm, energised presence and greater resilience. Imagine experiencing purposeful, powerful practices that offer the opportunity to embed and sustain your learning to your own benefit and to the benefit of those around you.

*Pause for breath. Pause for thought. Pause...and make mindful choices.*

This restorative week in Eskdalemuir will introduce frameworks from dialogue practice alongside gentle movements from t'ai chi, combining mental and physical activity to refresh your mind, body and leadership spirit. Through guided first person inquiry you will connect with all your senses and increase awareness of your habits of thinking and talking and the ways in which they serve or hinder you. Working with others you will explore in safety how to embody good dialogue practices, increasing your capacity to understand how conversations get stuck and so to contribute to a more fruitful outcome

To benefit from the week, you need only a sense of curiosity and a willingness to meet and explore the unfamiliar - no previous experience of t'ai chi or dialogue is required! As we work, talk, live and laugh together, you will be prepared to risk changing your breathing, your thinking, your presence and your habits of conversation in service to the possibility of deepening and sustaining your leadership spirit.

### About me and t'ai chi...

I practice t'ai chi with Five Winds School in Edinburgh ([www.five-winds.co.uk](http://www.five-winds.co.uk)). My t'ai chi has developed hand-in-hand with my evolution as a dialogue practitioner. Pause for Breath is the manifestation of my passion to continue to explore connections between these apparently different disciplines. For more about me see the "about" page.

### Together...

In a venue selected for simplicity, comfort and tranquillity, we will meet for lunch on Monday and spend the afternoon in introductions to each other and t'ai chi. Then each morning will begin with gentle movements and breath awareness, followed by work with some key elements of dialogue practice. After a generous lunch break, our focus will be practice-based to support deeper awareness of your leadership voice and presence.

The practices you encounter in the week will enable you to develop resilience in your leadership spirit for the long term. There may be energy for evening dialogues and there will be both group learning and plenty of individual space for reflection and processing. We will say our goodbyes over lunch on Friday, with the intent that we have time for a relatively relaxed journey home for the weekend.

## **Practicalities...**

**Dates/times:** registration before midday on Monday 13 September 2010 – in time for lunch – and leaving from 2pm on Friday 17 September 2010, after lunch.

**Number of places:** 16

**Location:** in a purpose-built retreat house in the Borders of Scotland.

**Accommodation:** in single rooms with shared facilities.

**Fees:** including accommodation for 4 nights and all meals:

- For organisation-sponsored places: £1,000 per person
- For individuals and special circumstances: £700 per person

Originate is not registered for VAT as I keep my business small to maintain a good life-work balance.

**Registrations:** please email me at [info@originate.org.uk](mailto:info@originate.org.uk) for a booking form. A non-returnable deposit of £100 is also required. The remaining fee will be due 6 weeks before the workshop (1 Aug 2010). Cancellation terms are shown on the booking form.

## **Optional extra...coaching support**

If you wish to gain further value from your participation in this retreat, I invite you to consider a short series of coaching sessions to support you in preparing for the retreat and in embedding your learning and practices.

## **Participant experiences**

The first retreat attracted diverse participants and their reasons for participating included: to find my heart and my courage; to learn how to relax, and properly recharge the batteries so I can have a better focus on the things I have to do and the changes I need to make in my life; time to really discover me, find my leadership voice and get in touch with my essence in a more visceral way; and to step back, reflect, ponder, find perspective.

One participant from public services, funded the week herself, and declared “it was better than a holiday” She went onto say “The link between the mind and body shown by the t'ai chi work was revelatory to me. I have a greater understanding of what's going on inside me in stressful situations and understanding is a starting point for handling those situations.”

A CEO from the NHS said that the week was “a true breath of fresh air, exhausting and exhilarating at the same time. I truly found a real strength and energy from learning the connection between mind and body and how to use that energy and focus to cope with everyday situations never mind the stressful ones!”

Another participant said “I have had deeper insights and more powerful experiences than I have ever had on a course or during my working life. The ripples and resonances from this one week in March will be felt throughout my life.”

Finally, an experienced Executive Coach wrote: "having been immersed in personal development for many years, I found Amanda's course touched me deeply. Working on my own, and with others in community, the course provided me with much needed respite from relentless activity, and emotional storms. It offered time and space - to find my place of calm, centred, balance; and to regain my perspective. This retreat is clearly work that's close to Amanda's heart; and I found this to be inspiring and engaging."